

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application:

1.-10. (Cancelled).

11. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

determining whether to supply alternate content to a terminal device associated with a user of an interactive television service that provides video content through a content signal, the alternate content to be cached on the terminal device; responsive to determining to supply the alternate content to the user of the interactive television service, sending the alternate content to a cache of the terminal device; determining when a specified portion of the alternate content is sent to the terminal device, wherein the specified portion is less than all of the alternate content; and inserting a hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the terminal device from the an interactive television service provider via a network with which the terminal device and the interactive television service provider are connected after the specified portion of the alternate content has been sent to the terminal device; wherein the hot key signal causes instructions to present for display an on-screen image overlaid on the video content, wherein the on-screen image indicates availability of the alternate content prior to displaying the alternate content that has been cached, and wherein selection of the on-screen image by the user results in the terminal device supplying the alternate content from the cache.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein determining whether to supply alternate content to the terminal device is based on information supplied by a provider of the video content.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein determining whether to supply alternate content to the terminal device is based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the IP data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that identifies where the alternate content is located.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the alternate content is related in subject matter to the video content currently being displayed to the user.

16. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the network comprises a cable network.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the network comprises a satellite network.

18. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the network comprises a Fiber-To-The-Curb (FTTC) network.

19. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the network comprises a Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) network.

20. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the network comprises a Very high speed Digital Subscriber Line (VDSL) network.

21.-39. (Cancelled).

40. (Currently amended) A system comprising:

a head-end transport portion to transmit content signals over a network; and

a hot key generation portion to:

determine whether to supply alternate content to a terminal device associated with a user of an interactive television service, the alternate content to be cached on the terminal device;

responsive to determining to supply the alternate content to the terminal device,

send the alternate content to a cache of the terminal device; and

generate a hot key signal indicating availability of the alternate content;

wherein the hot key signal causes instructions to present for display an on-screen image overlaid on a television program that is displayed based on the content signals when the hot key signal is determined to be relevant to the user, wherein the ~~on-screen image~~ on-screen image indicates availability of the alternate content prior to displaying the alternate content that has been cached on the terminal device, and wherein selection of the on-screen image by the user results in the terminal device supplying the alternate content from the cache.

41. (Currently amended) The system of claim 40, wherein the head-end transport portion receives the hot key signal from the hot key generation portion and multiplexes the hot key signal with the content ~~signal~~ signals.

42. (Previously presented) The system of claim 40, wherein the hot key generation portion determines whether to supply the alternate content to the user of the interactive television service based on information supplied by a content provider.

43. (Previously presented) The system of claim 40, wherein the hot key generation portion determines whether to supply the alternate content to the user of the interactive television service based on information generated by an interactive television service provider.

44. (Previously presented) The system of claim 40, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the IP data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that identifies where the alternate content is located.

45. (Previously presented) The system of claim 40, wherein the alternate content is related to content currently being displayed to the user.

46. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the network comprises a cable network.

47. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the network comprises a satellite network.

48. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the network comprises a Fiber-To-The-Curb (FTTC) network.

49. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the network comprises a Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) network.

50. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the network comprises a Very high speed Digital Subscriber Line (VDSL) network.

51.-68. (Cancelled).

69. (Currently amended) A machine readable medium comprising instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

~~determine whether to supply alternate content to at least one terminal device associated with users of an interactive television service, the alternate content to be cached on the at least one terminal device;~~

~~responsive to determining to supply alternate content to the at least one terminal device,~~

~~send the alternate content to a cache of each terminal device of the at least one terminal device;~~

send alternate content to a cache of a terminal device associated with a user;

generate a hot key signal indicating availability of the alternate content; and

insert the hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the ~~at least one~~ terminal device from an interactive television service provider via a network with which the ~~at least one~~ terminal device and the interactive television service provider are connected;

wherein the hot key signal causes instructions to present for display an on-screen image overlaid on a television program that is displayed based on the content signal ~~to a particular user of the users~~, wherein the on-screen image is displayed when the hot key signal is determined to be relevant to the ~~particular user~~ based on a selection history of the user and a particular when the cache of a ~~particular the~~ terminal device ~~of the at least one terminal device that is associated with the particular user received~~ receives at least a specified portion of the alternate content, wherein the on-screen image indicates availability of the alternate content prior to displaying the alternate content ~~that has been cached~~ stored in the particular cache, and wherein selection of the on-screen image by the ~~particular~~ user results in display of the alternate content from the ~~particular~~ cache.

70. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein a ~~determination from the instructions are executable by the processor~~ to determine whether to supply the alternate content to the ~~at least one~~ terminal device is based on information supplied by a content provider.

71. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein-a ~~determination from the instructions~~ are executable by the processor to determine whether to supply the alternate content to the ~~at least one terminal device~~ is based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

72. (Previously presented) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the IP data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that identifies where the alternate content is located.

73. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the alternate content is related to content currently being displayed to the ~~particular~~ user.

74. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the network comprises a cable network.

75. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the network comprises a satellite network.

76. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the network comprises a Fiber-To-The-Curb (FTTC) network.

77. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the network comprises a Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) network.

78. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the network comprises a Very high speed Digital Subscriber Line (VDSL) network.

79.-86. (Cancelled).

87. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the specified portion is all of the alternate content.

88. (Currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 69, wherein the specified portion is about 15 minutes of play time when the alternate content comprises video.

89. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the specified portion comprises ~~all~~ about 15 minutes of play time of the alternate content.

90. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the specified portion is about 15 minutes of play time when the alternate content comprises video.